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ABSTRACT

A study investigated how and when writing is used at the elementary school level to determine (1) what kind of instructional support elementary students receive, (2) what prewriting support is provided, (3) what support for revising is offered, and (4) what happens to the students' writings. Using preservice teachers as observers, data were collected in 75 elementary classrooms (grades 1 through 6) over a 3-week period. Analysis of observations indicated that the most frequent kind of instructional support used prewriting, composing, revising for conventions or ideas, and "fate" (collecting, grading, and various types of publishing). While prewriting activities (such as direction giving or brainstorming) occurred previous to 79% of the writing, many of these activities were inappropriate as support activities. No revising occurred during 66% of writing instruction, but revising support did occur 34% of the time. "Fate" occurred after 86% of the writing, although true publishing involving a real audience occurred less than 30% of the time. Elementary students received very little high quality instructional support for developing into self-directing writers, in part because elementary teachers adhere to the traditional pedagogy of collecting and grading written work even though current research shows that this inhibits writing. (Tables of data are included.) (SRT)

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Abstract

What Instructional Support Do Elementary Students Receive for Writing

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An observational study of instructional practices in writing investigated four questions: 1) Which elements of the writing process are teachers using? 2) What types of pre-writing support are provided? How often? 3) What types of support for revising are offered? How often? 4) What happens to the students' writings? Observers were trained to recognize writing, identify the steps of the writing process and to record observations of writing instruction. Data was collected in 75 elementary classrooms within 25 Midwestern schools during a 15 day period.

When writing occurred in elementary classrooms, the amount and quality of instructional support varied considerably. The most frequent pattern of instructional support was pre-writing, composing, fate (40%). Pre-writing support was provided previous to 79% of the composing. The most frequent types of pre-writing support were direction-giving (36%) and brainstorming (31%). Revising support was provided after only 34% of the composing. The most frequent types of revising support were in the mechanics area: spelling, punctuation, or capitalization, offered through oral and written suggestions. Revising support for both ideas and mechanics was provided only 7% of the time. Collecting and grading were the typical fates for children's writings (51%). The teacher as examiner was children's most frequent audience.

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What Instructional Support Do Elementary Students Receive?

Cherlyn H. Sunflower and Leslie W. Crawford

During the last decade, there has been a public outcry as to students' (K-12) literacy in general and students' writing abilities in particular. While a growing body of research has addressed how instruction should occur, little is known about the actual instruction students receive.

Applebee (1981) completed an extensive study of the instruction surrounding secondary students' writing. The instructional picture that Applebee found was quite bleak. Although teachers reported using pre-writing activities as brainstorming, in observations Applebee found that actual pre-writing activities included only a brief topic statement and instructions related to length and format of the writing assignments. Students were expected to begin writing within three minutes without benefit of discussion or brainstorming. Post-writing activities were limited to marking or correcting students' spelling, mechanics, and usage. Publishing or sharing of students' writings with others was rare. Students' primary audiences were teachers in the examiners' role. These practices clearly violate the established instructional practices indicated in the literature and by researchers (Graves, 1984).

If instructional practices are as bleak as what Applebee found at the secondary level, what then is happening at the elementary school level? In order to investigate whether change is occuring at the elementary level, information must be collected in four areas:

1. What instructional support do elementary students receive?
2. What kind of pre-writing support is provided?
3. What kind of support for revising is offered?
4. What happens to the students' writings?

An observational study was designed in order to gather detailed information on current practices in elementary schools (without the complications introduced by self-report data). Pre-service teachers were taught as a part of a methods course: 1) to recognize writing, 2) to identify the steps of the writing process, and 3) to record observations of writing instruction.

First, the observers were taught how to distinguish between writing and other pencil and paper type activities. For the purpose of this study, writing was defined as a process in which a student creates and puts own thoughts down in print in units of at least a word. This definition excluded 1) filling in blanks on a worksheet when the answer was predetermined and 2) copying words that were not the students' own creation/idea.

Next, the observers were taught the steps of the writing process (pre-writing, composing, revising, and publishing) and how to record what they observed. Accuracy was developed through over twenty hours of instruction which included: 1) theory on the writing process; 2) demonstrations of the writing process followed by the observers identifying and orally describing the steps; 3) micro-teaching by the observers of preplanned writing lessons with feedback from the researcher on the various steps in the writing process; 4) designing of writing lessons by the observers with feedback from the researcher. Following two pilot studies (Fall 1983 and Spring 1984), this data collection procedure was modified and revised to achieve over 95% interrater reliability on identification of the steps in the writing process.

During October, 1984 observational data was collected in 75 elementary classrooms: 15 first grade classrooms, 17 second grade

classrooms, 16 third grade classrooms, 10 fourth grade classrooms, 2 fourth/fifth grade combination classrooms, 8 fifth grade classrooms, and 7 sixth grade classrooms. All observations occurred all day during the same three week period (15 days). Approximately twenty-five public and private schools in urban, small town, and rural areas in the upper midwest were represented.

Over the last two years inservice in 6 schools of a larger school district included in the study had emphasized writing. This inservice consisted of approximately thirty hours of instruction and was offered to teachers at one grade level per year. Inservice was also offered to only one other school in the study. A private (church) school offered six hours of inservice in writing instruction.

The format used to report observations was a daily log of writing activities. The log format (See example of the Daily Observation Log Format, Figure 1.) included the date, description of what occurred before writing (pre-writing), what assistance, if any, the student received during or after composing, and the fate(s) of the writing. (Note: Fate refers to a teacher's final instructional action(s) in response to a child's writing.)

			DID WRITING OCCUR?	PRE-WRITING		REVISING				FATE	
T	WK	DAY	YES/NO	Yes No	TYPE	Yes No	CONVENTIONS	Yes No	IDEAS	Yes No	TYPE

Figure 1

Daily Observation Log Format

In addition observers collected or photocopied for each writing that occurred at least one example of the elementary students' writing or the materials used in writing instruction. (See Example of An Activity Reported as Writing, Figure 2 and Examples of Materials Used in Writing Instruction, Figure 3.)

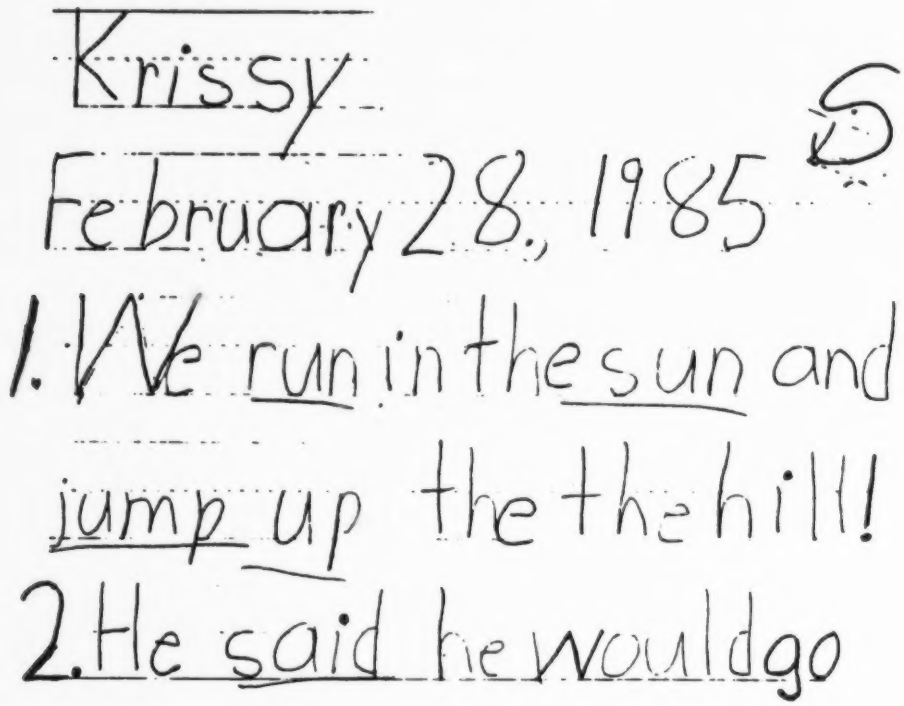


Figure 2

Example of an Activity Reported As Writing

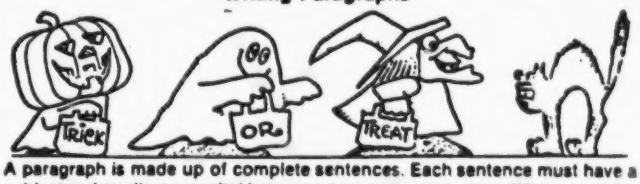
More Paragraphs

Here is a page on which you can write two storytelling paragraphs. You may write about Peter in the attic or any other topic you like.

Example of a typical writing assignment found in workbooks.

Name _____ Date _____ Skill: Writing paragraphs

Writing Paragraphs



A paragraph is made up of complete sentences. Each sentence must have a subject and predicate, capital letters and correct punctuation. When you write a paragraph, make sure that all the sentences are about the same subject.

Answer each of the following questions on the lines below. When you are finished, you'll have a whole paragraph! Write a good title for your paragraph.

1. What do you do to get ready for Halloween?
2. What kind of costume will you wear this year?
3. With whom do you go trick or treating?
4. What are two safety rules for trick or treating?
5. What is your favorite treat?

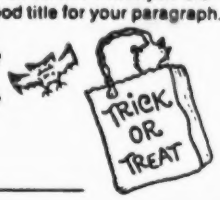


Figure 3

Examples of Materials Used in Writing Instruction

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Of the 75 collected observational logs, 74 logs were returned in usable form. Two raters (one of the researchers and a trained research assistant) read each written account of the activities reported in the daily logs and determined if each reported activity was indeed writing. Then for each actual writing activity, categories within each step of the writing process were developed to classify the writing instruction that occurred. Finally the raters coded each writing activity according to type of prewriting, revising, and fate. (Fate refers to a teacher's final instructional action(s) in response to a child's writing. Fate included collecting, grading, and various types of publishing.) Raters added and revised categories until information from the daily logs could be classified with at least 95% agreement between the two observers.

What Instructional Support Do Students Receive?

The type and quality of instructional support that teachers provide elementary students during writing varied considerably. The most frequent pattern of instructional support was pre-writing, composing, fate. This pattern occurred in 40% of the writing situations. (See Patterns of Instructional Support, Figure 4.) The next two most frequent patterns of instructional support were pre-writing, composing, revising (conventions and/or ideas), fate. These patterns occurred in 30% of the writing situations. A less frequent pattern, composing and fate, occurred in 14% of the writing situations. Other patterns as 1) pre-writing and composing only; 2) composing only; 3) pre-writing, composing, and revising only; 4) composing, revising, and fate only; and 5) composing and revising only, occurred in 16% of the writing situations.

TYPES OF INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT	Frequency	Percentage of Total Writings
Pattern 1a Pre-writing, Composing, Revising (Conventions and Ideas), Fate*	17	7%
Pattern 1b Pre-writing, Composing, Revising (Conventions or Ideas), Fate*	52	23%
Pattern 2 Pre-writing, Composing, Fate*	91	40%
Pattern 3 Composing, Fate*	32	14%
Pattern 4 Pre-writing, Composing	11	5%
Pattern 5 Pre-writing, Composing, Revising (Conventions)	10	4%
Pattern 6 Composing	10	4%
Pattern 7 Other	6	3%
TOTAL WRITINGS	229	100%

*Note: Fate refers to the teacher's final instructional action(s) in response to a child's writing such as collecting, grading, and various types of publishing.

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TYPES OF INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT	Frequency	Percentage of Total Writings
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Pattern 1b Pre-writing, Composing, Revising (Conventions <u>or</u> Ideas), Fate*	52	23%
Pattern 2 Pre-writing, Composing, Fate*	91	40%
Pattern 3 Composing, Fate*	32	14%
Pattern 4 Pre-writing, Composing	11	5%
Pattern 5 Pre-writing, Composing, Revising (Conventions)	10	4%
Pattern 6 Composing	10	4%
Pattern 7 Other	6	3%
TOTAL WRITINGS	229	100%

*Note: Fate refers to the teacher's final instructional action(s) in response to a child's writing such as collecting, grading, and various types of publishing.

Figure 4

Patterns of Instructional Support

Discussion

According to Daigon (1982) the traditional pedegogy for writing instruction has consisted of three steps: (1) select (and assign) the topic, (2)

correct errors, and (3) expect improvement. This traditional pedagogy, a product-oriented approach to instruction, is commonly found in language arts textbooks (Graves, 1984).

Present authorities on writing instruction (Graves, 1984; Daigon, 1982) recommend a process-oriented pedagogy. This approach consists of four basic steps: 1) pre-writing, 2) composing, 3) revising, and 4) publishing. While data from observations of elementary teachers appears to follow more closely the recommended process-oriented pedagogy, these findings are not unexpected considering that the observers were collecting information using the steps of the writing process. Therefore before conclusions are drawn, the quality of the instructional support within each of the four steps must be considered.

What Kind of Pre-Writing Support Was Provided?

Pre-writing of some kind occurred prior to 79% of the composing (181 writings). No pre-writing was observed prior to 21% of the composing (48 writings). Many of the writings were preceeded by more than one type of pre-writing. A total of 307 pre-writing activities were provided prior to the 181 writing experiences with prewriting. These pre-writing activities were classified into six basic types: direction-giving, skills instruction, reading motivators, experiential stimulators, discussion techniques, and brainstorming techniques. (See Figure 5, Types of Pre-Writing Support Activities.)

Direction-giving or skills instruction occurred in 43% of the 307 pre-writing situations. The teacher or students reading stimuli material prior to writing occurred in 6% of the 307 pre-writing situations. Special experiences such as a science experiment, celebrating a child's birthday, going on a field trip, listening to a record or drawing, occurred before to writing in 8% of the 307 pre-writing situations. Oral expression (discussion 12% or brainstorming 31%) was used as a support technique in 43% of the 307 pre-writing situations. When one considers that no pre-writing was observed prior to 21% of the composing, procedures that involved students in experiences and oral language expression prior to the students composing were limited.

TYPES OF PRE-WRITING SUPPORT in 181 out of 229 writings (79%)	Frequency	Percent of 307
I. DIRECTION-GIVING	110	36%
Descriptors: Teacher read directions Pupil read directions Pupil did a worksheet Teacher wrote definition on board Pupil looked up definitions Teacher said spelling words Teacher provided a word bank Teacher gave a story starter/ pattern/sentence Teacher suggested topic Pupil used earlier assignment to compose something new Teacher showed an example		
II. SKILLS INSTRUCTION	21	7%
Descriptors: Teacher taught skills Teacher reviewed skills		
III. READING MOTIVATORS	19	6%
Descriptors: Teacher read stimulus material Pupil read stimulus material		
IV. EXPERIENTIAL STIMULATORS	26	8%
Descriptors: Pupil listened to a record Teacher sang a song Pupil went on a field trip Pupil participated in a class activity Teacher personal sharing Pupil drew pictures prior to writing Teacher showed a picture Pupil answered questions about a picture(s) Pupil brought something to school		
V. DISCUSSION TECHNIQUES	37	12%
Descriptors: Teacher led discussion		
VI. BRAINSTORMING TECHNIQUES	94	31%
Descriptors: Pupil brainstormed Teacher wrote student ideas on board/special paper Teacher repeated what was on board Pupil chose an idea from brainstormed list Class created a sample together Class wrote story starter together		
TOTALS	307	100%

Figure 5

Types of Pre-Writing

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Discussion

The beginning of any writing lesson is critical to the quality of the eventual writing. Pre-writing procedures as thinking, talking, working in groups, role playing, interviews, debates, and problem solving have beneficial results on the quality of students' writing. (Hayens, 1978). Teachers must learn to emphasize and exploit the close connection between oral and written language before asking children to write (Lundsteen, 1976).

Although these are widely recommended pre-writing procedures, Applebee (1981) found in his observational studies that secondary teachers were using the traditional writing pedagogy. Applebee reported that the most common pre-writing procedures included introducing the topic plus conveying the form, length of the assignment, time frame for completion, and method of evaluation. The amount of instruction from when secondary teachers began introducing a topic until the first student began writing was just over three minutes.

Applebee's observational data conflicted with teachers' perceptions of how frequently they used recommended pre-writing procedures. Teachers reported using discussion or brainstorming before 14 to 37% of the writings. Reports from students also conflicted with teachers' perceptions of how frequently they used recommended pre-writing activities. Students surveyed by Applebee reported that discussion or brainstorming occurred only 4 to 13% of the time.

Although in this study of elementary teachers no time frames for pre-writing activities were recorded, direction-giving was the most frequently used strategy. From this focus on telling plus the fact that no pre-writing was observed prior to 21% of the composing, it

would appear then that elementary teachers are still using a traditional pedagogy of select and assign the topic.

In contrast with Applebee's findings at the secondary level, oral language activities before writing are occuring occasionally at the elementary level. The use of instructional support which includes oral language may be a result of the inservice programs that have occurred over the last two to five years in some school districts. Since it is particularly critical for students (K-6) to develop a connection between oral and written language, inservice efforts must continue to stress this aspect of the writing process.

What Kind of Support for Revising Was Provided?

Revising of some kind occurred after 37% of the composing (85 writings) although revising for both ideas and conventions occurred only 7% of the time. No support for revising occurred after 63% of the composing. Instructional support for conventions will be reported first; next the infrequent support students received in revising their ideas will be presented.

Revising Support for Conventions

Instructional support for revising for conventions occurred three times more frequently (128 times) than for revising for ideas (43 times). Instructional support for conventions was provided in six different areas: spelling, punctuation, capitalization, indention, handwriting, and general checking for errors. (See Figure 6, Revising for Conventions - Support Areas).

Support for conventions focused on spelling in 34% of the 128

times that revising for conventions occurred. Punctuation and capitalization support were next in frequency - 16% and 12% respectively. Support in handwriting, indention, and sentence structure occurred infrequently - 1.5% 1,5% and 1% respectively. General editing was the most frequent area of revision support. It occurred in 34% of the 128 times revising for conventions occurred. When support for conventions was provided, it was usually given in more than one area.

In the spelling area (34%) teachers employed a number of different revision strategies. The two strategies most frequently used were 1) pointing out mispellings to students and 2) giving correct spellings when asked by students. Strategies used infrequently were 1) reminding students to sound out words and 2) reminding students to look words up in a dictionary.

In the punctuation area (16%), three revision strategies were employed. The most frequent was a general reminder to use correct punctuation. Less frequent strategies were checking pupils' punctuation and helping pupils punctuate.

In the capitalization area (12%), two revision strategies were employed: reminding the class to capitalize and checking pupils' work. In the handwriting area (1.5%), one revision strategy was used: checking pupils' legibility. In the indention area (1.5%), only one revision strategy was reported: reminding the class to indent their paragraphs. In the sentence structure area (1%), only one revision strategy was observed: reminding the class to use complete sentences. (It was interesting to note how little support students were given in forming complete sentences. This finding futher indicates how little assistance children are given in clarifying their ideas.)

A general editing was the most frequent area of support (34%). This usually consisted of the teacher assisting the pupil in looking for errors with possibly the student rewriting or the pupils being told to check for their own errors with no guidance as to what an error was. Strategies less frequently used were 1) teacher correction of errors, 2) a partner checking for errors, 3) pupils fixing errors that the teacher noted, and 4) a lesson on mechanics with work handed back for correction.

REVISING FOR CONVENTIONS in 85 out of 229 writings (37%)	Frequency	Percent of 128
I. SPELLING	43	34%
Descriptors: Teacher reminded pupil to sound out words Pupil asked teacher how to spell/ teacher gave correct spellings Teacher pointed out misspellings/ teacher checked spellings Pupil revised spelling errors Pupil used spelling dictionary		
II. PUNCTUATION	20	16%
Descriptors: Teacher reminded class to use correct punctuation Teacher checked punctuation Teacher helped punctuate		
III. CAPITALIZATION	16	12%
Descriptors: Teacher reminded class to capitalize/teacher checked Pupil checked capitalization		
IV. HANDWRITING	2	1.5%
Descriptors: Teacher checked legibility		
V. INDENTATION	2	1.5%
Descriptors: Teacher reminded class to indent		
VI. SENTENCE STRUCTURE	1	1%
Descriptors: Teacher reminded class to use complete sentences		
VII. GENERAL EDITING	44	34%
Descriptors: Teacher assisted pupil in looking for errors Teacher corrected errors Partners checked for errors Pupil self-checked Pupil corrected errors teacher noted Teacher taught lesson on mechanics and handed back writing for pupil to correct Teacher made pupil rewrite Teacher praise		
TOTALS	128	100%

Figure 6

Revising for Conventions: Support Areas and Strategies

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Revising Support for Ideas

Instructional support for assisting students in revising their ideas was limited. (See Figure 7, Revising for Ideas - Support Strategies). No particular revision areas were identified by observers; therefore, support was classified by the type of support strategy employed by the teacher: evaluation, comments, reading, praise, and questions.

The two most frequent strategies for helping students' communicate their ideas were evaluation and oral or written suggestions to students as to how to express their ideas. These strategies were utilized in 25% and 51% of the 43 times revising for ideas occurred. Students reading their writings outloud, a teacher reading the work outloud to the pupil, and a teacher making positive comments about the pupils ideas were used infrequently - 12% and 7% respectively. No teachers were reported to have asked students questions about their ideas. When students were offered support for revising their ideas, it was often provided in more than one way.

TYPES OF REVISING FOR IDEAS in approximately 28 out of 229 writings (7%)	Frequency	Percent of 43
I. EVALUATION	11	25%
Descriptors: Teacher evaluated ideas and conventions Partners checked		
II. COMMENTS	22	51%
Descriptors: Teacher gave oral suggestions Teacher made written suggestions		
III. READING	5	12%
Descriptors: Teacher asked pupil to reread for sense Pupil read writings outloud to teacher Pupil read (silently) and rewrote		
IV. PRAISE	3	7%
Descriptors: Teacher gave praise		
V. QUESTIONS	2	5%
Descriptors: Teacher asked pupil to elaborate Teacher asked questions	(2) (0)	
TOTALS	43	100%

Figure 7

Revising for Ideas - Support Strategies

Discussion

While not every writing needs to be refined, learning to revise is a critical aspect of the writing process which students need to acquire. Clearly children are not receiving enough instructional support for revising their ideas nor support which fosters students' abilities to self-evaluate. The overemphasis teachers put on editing for correctness of conventions rather than responding to students' ideas, often results in students perceiving their ideas as worthless. This overt attention to conventions limits students' growth in written communication and distorts their desire to write.

Another important concern is the quality of instructional support children receive. Sunflower (1985) recommends usage of three support strategies which help children learn to self evaluate: reading aloud, praise, and questions. Instead elementary teachers' support was found to be limited to giving reminders, checking for errors, and giving suggestions. While these types of instructional support serve a corrective function, they do not stimulate students to think critically about their writing nor do they encourage students to assume responsibility for revising their own ideas. Elementary teachers need to acquire more effective revision strategies: strategies that foster students' growing abilities to communicate their ideas and strategies that encourage independence.

What Happened to the Writings?

The final stage of the writing process is usually labeled publishing. Due to the kinds of things that happened to students' writings, this stage of the writing process was renamed fate. A fate was observable after 86% of the writings (197). Most writing situations had more than one type of fate. A total of 343 fates occurred after the 197 writing experiences having a fate. Observed fates consisted of three basic types: collecting/grading, sharing, and miscellaneous. (See Figure 8, Types of Fates.)

Collecting/grading predominated 51% of the 343 fates. Within this category collecting or checking to see if the writing was completed was the most frequent fate (107). Other frequent fates within this category were grading or correcting (40), returning the writing to the student (23), or throwing the writing away (3).

Sharing occurred in 29% of the 343 fates. The teacher posting the writing (33) and the pupils or teacher reading the student's work to the class (32) were the most frequent kinds of sharing. The teacher filing the writing to show to parents at a later date (13); the teacher or pupil sending a letter off to a pen pal, trusted adult, or unknown audience (10); making a class or individual book (10); and exchanging with peers (6) were infrequent sharings.

The miscellaneous category resulted in 20% of the 343 fates. In the miscellaneous category no audience for writing was given to or discussed with students. Since there was no intended audience, these fates were not classified as sharing. Within the miscellaneous category, students writing in their diaries/journals was the most frequent (31 writings). Note: While the actual audience for a diary is self,

this was not discussed with students. Rewriting on special paper (12) or on the computer (1), illustrating writings (9), and mounting writing on special paper (10) were infrequent fates.

TYPES OF FATES in 229 Writings (86%)	Frequency	Percent of 343
I. COLLECTING - GRADING	173	51%
Descriptors: Teacher checked to see if writing was completed Teacher collected Teacher graded Teacher returned Teacher threw away		
II. SHARING	101	29%
Descriptors: Pupil read to class Teacher read to class Pupil exchanged with peers Teacher posted Teacher filed to show parents Teacher made into a class booklet and shared with class Pupil put in book to be shared with class Teacher sent or pupil sent letter)		
III. MISCELLANEOUS FATES	69	20%
Descriptors: Pupil rewrote on special paper Teacher copied students' writing on board, special paper or typed it Pupil put in journals Pupil illustrated writings Pupil cut out writing/made into a project Pupil copied writings on the computer Pupil won a prize Teacher mounted Pupil mounted		
TOTALS	343	100%

Figure 8

TYPES OF FATES

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Discussion

Children's feelings about writing and their motivation to write are affected by what happens to their work. If a writing environment is to be created, then children's writings need to be "published" in some manner other than collecting and grading. This means real purposes and audiences for the writings with appropriate fates.

There are three major purposes for writing 1) Functional writing, (Do Not Touch sign, Thank You note, Get Well card, Invitation, Complaint Letter, and Business Letter), 2) Memory extension/idea organization (Things to do list, Shopping list, Trip list, diary/journal, log, and notetaking), and 3) Entertainment (short stories, fairy tales, riddles, jokes, poems, essays, and reports).

There are also ample audiences with whom the three types of writings can be shared. The audience for functional writings could include a trusting adult or a wider audience. Appropriate fates are posting signs and sending letters. The audience for memory extension/idea organization is self. Appropriate publishing for lists might be on special paper; appropriate publishing for diaries, journals, and logs would be a special private book. The audience for entertainment writings can vary from trusted adult or wider audience to unknown audience. Appropriate ways to publish are reading aloud to a friend; making individual and class books to share; publishing in a school or city newspaper; or sending it to a children's magazine.

The large proportion of fates in the collecting/grading category indicates that the teacher as examiner was the most frequent audience for elementary students. Clearly the data indicates that teachers still perceive the writing pedagogy as requiring correcting

and grading. Collecting and grading is an ineffective fate. It is time consuming for teachers, is of limited value for improving students' writing, and inhibits students' writing fluency. Children need to write to become writers. This includes a variety of audiences and numerous publishing methods.

Summary

This study investigated four research questions dealing with instructional practices in writing at the elementary level. Findings from the research will be presented under each question.

What instructional support did elementary students receive?

The instructional support provided by the elementary teachers in this study was classified into seven patterns. Pattern 1a, (pre-writing, composing, revising for conventions and ideas, fate), recommended by the authoritative sources, was practiced during only 7 percent of the time writing actually occurred. The two most frequent patterns of instructional support were Pattern 2 (pre-writing, composing, fate) which occurred 40 percent of the time and Pattern 1b (pre-writing, composing, revising with conventions or ideas, and fate) which occurred 23 percent of the time. The balance of the writing instruction utilized even fewer steps of the writing process.

What kind of pre-writing support was provided?

No pre-writing support occurred previous to 21 percent of the writing instruction. While pre-writing occurred previous to 79 percent of the composing, many of the pre-writing activities were inappropriate as support activities. An analysis of the pre-writing activities reported are presented below:

Inappropriate Support		
Direction giving	36%	
Skills Instruction	7%	
		43%
Incomplete Support (lacks oral sharing)		
Reading Motivators	6%	
Experiential Stimulators	8%	
		14%
Appropriate Support		
Discussion	12%	
Brainstorming	31%	
		43%

What kind of support for revising was offered?

No revising occurred during 66 percent of the writing instruction. While revising support did occur 34 percent of the time, support for both ideas and conventions was offered in only 7 percent of the writing instruction.

Areas of revising support for conventions most frequently focused upon were spelling, punctuation, and capitalization, and general editing. Although we did not classify revising support in the convention area by the strategy used, we concluded from the descriptors that the most frequent strategy was oral and written evaluative comments. This area needs further research.

Teachers did not articulate particular areas where children were having difficulty expressing their ideas. Therefore, instructional support was classified by the revision strategy which the teachers employed.

Inappropriate Support		
Evaluation	25%	
Comments*	51%	
		76%

Appropriate Support		
Reading	12%	
Praise	7%	
"Questions"	5%	
		24%

* Comments were classified as inappropriate support because someone else was doing the student's work. This allows/encourages a student to become dependent on someone else to do his/her thinking.

What Happened to the Writing?

A fate was observed after 86 percent of the writing. Fate referred to the teacher's final instructional actions in response to a child's writing. The publishing stage of the writing process was renamed fate because of what typically happened to children's writings. True publishing with a real audience was observed in less than 30 percent of the observed fates. Based upon the amount of collecting and grading being practiced, teachers still adher to the older writing pedogogy. This occurs despite the current literature clearly specifying that collecting and grading inhibits writing.

Inappropriate Support Collecting/Grading	51%
Incomplete Support Miscellaneous	20%
Appropriate Support Sharing	29%

Conclusions

Clearly elementary students are receiving very little quality instructional support for developing into self-directing writers. While some applications of the recommended writing process have been incorporated into classroom teachers' instructional strategies, the traditional pedogogy still influences the strategies being employed by elementary teachers in this study. Improvements include brainstorming as part of the pre-writing, as well as some provisions for an audience and purpose for students have been implimented. Unfortunately, teachers are still using instructional strategies that have children writing for the sake of learning to write instead of writing as part of a meaningful communication process.

In order to further influence the instructional strategies of classroom teachers, three needs must be addressed:

1. Teachers must begin to view their instructional goal as encouraging a developmental process in which a child grows in ability to organize and communicate ideas.
2. Teachers need to view writing as a way to make sense out of and have impact upon the world. Writing should become a part of all learning rather than be separate subject to teach.
3. While many teachers are aware of the writing process, they have had little experience applying the newer pedagogy.

First, preservice programs and inservice workshops need to continue to involve teachers (as did the Bay Area Writing Project) in a variety of complete writing experiences. The teachers can, through their own experiences, see and feel the differences in the quality of their writing product, when for instance, no prewriting or incomplete prewriting support is given verses when full prewriting support is offered. Teachers will then value the various steps of the writing process. Second, teachers need to collect and view, over time, samples of their own and their students' writings in order to see growth in ability to communicate. And finally, teachers like all learners, need to practice the newer pedagogy while receiving supportive/corrective feedback.

Micro-teaching (Joyce and Weil, 1980) over a period of several months would allow for all three considerations. Through micro-teaching teachers could practice techniques in the newer writing pedagogy and receive the social support from collegues that is necessary

for growth and change. At the same time the other teachers (acting as students) could be gaining the needed background experiences in writing that they lack. If teachers collected over several months their own writings produced during the micro-teaching, they could be directed to explore their own developmental growth in ability to express their ideas. We encourage individuals responsible for influencing the instructional strategies of classroom teachers to consider these recommendations.

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